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EXPANSION OF SODA PLANT AT LUKAVAC, YUGOSLAVIA

Engr Frederik Geri

The Yugoslav Five-Year Plan calls for an increase in the production of ammonia soda in Yugoslavia to 50,000 tons and of caustic soda to 35,000 tons in 1951, or 2.3 and 2.5 times respectively, as much as was produced in 1939.

The major part of this goal is to be fulfilled by the soda factory at Lukavac, which has all the natural conditions required for the development of this industry.

The production of caustic soda has shown a 30-percent increase over prewar production since the installation of an electrolysis plant at the "Jugovinil" Factory and the completion of the electrolysis plant at Lukavac.

The principal factors that have assured and increased the production of soda at Lukavac are the renovation and consolidation of the former installations for the production of caustic and ammonia sods, the completion of the electrolysis plant, and the enlargement necessary for such production.

The thermal power plant is composed of eight steam boilers, two turbines, and a reserve steam unit. The boilers are a bottleneck, and one of the turbines is seriously defective. The other generator units are only for emergency use and involve a large factor of uncertainty. The connection with the outside electric network is unsatisfactory and undependable. The other plants are in a similar unsatisfactory condition.

The supply of lime is affected by the change-over of the Tuzla-Doboj railroad from a narrow- to a standard-gauge track, which confuses the whole transportation system connecting the factory to the rest of the network, and especially with its own quarry. This problem requires prompt solution if the necessary quantities of lime are to be assured, pending the final change-over to a standard-gauge track from the quarry to the railroad on the Brcko-Banovici line.

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A reserve limekiln which is under construction for the production of carbonic acid should be completed as soon as possible. Reserves of Yugoslav-made firebrick of proper quality must be obtained (from Store) to assure a steady supply.

The system of supplying salt water is another problem. The existing channel should be changed gradually and the possibility of replacing iron pipes with Yugoslav-made asbestos-cement pressure pipes examined. The necessary number of salt-water tanks ought to be obtained from the Kreka salt mine, and measures taken to reactivate dried-up salt mines. Another battery is essential for the production of caustic soda.

The building of a new plant for the electrolysis of common salt was begun before the war, but work on it was discontinued and deferred temporarily. All construction and about three fourths of the assembly of installations has been completed. The remainler of the work can be finished next year [1950? 19517]. This will alleviate the delay in the development of caustic soda production and, to a certain extent, solve the problem of chlorine production, which is closely allied with the paper and cellulose industry, metallurgy, agricultural pest control, etc.

To date, the electrolysis buildings have been used for purposes other than those originally intended. This practice must cease, the present inventory should be put in order, everything should be removed from the plant that is not connected with electrolysis, and preparations for installation should begin.

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